TEACHING

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EDITORIAL

IN THIS issue we offer articles on subjects which have become crucial in the educational world of today.

Many of us are drifting in a morass of written and spoken words, and are asking—What exactly is the new educational structure of the country to be? How far has a beginning been made? What schemes have been implemented? How far have they advanced? Few of us today have the time to study reports and statistics and those of us who make the attempt are assailed with doubts about their authenticity. It is therefore very encouraging when someone like Mr Patwardhan gets down to brass tacks and gives us the results of his research in a concise and straightforward manner.

Mr Lahiri has tackled one of the aspects of the new scheme of reorganized Secondary education—Multipurpose schools. Multipurpose education is much in vogue and is the subject of much speculation, and governments of states are urging the establishment of such schools.

Government policies regarding the use and publication of textbooks have raised a hornets' nest during the last year or more. Those who publish textbooks and those of us who are ordered which ones to use know what Himalayan blunders are being made. Mr Singh while devoting a large part of his article to what makes a good textbook, also draws attention to the corruption that now exists in the textbook field.

Mrs Kotwal rightly emphasizes the value of good reading for children, and the Editor's article attempts to show some of the ways in which this reading can be encouraged.

Our next issue in September is to be devoted to the Teaching of Science, and we hope our contributors will send us articles on various aspects of this subject. The following suggestions might be useful: (1) General Science *versus* a particular science; (2) Correlation of General Science with other subjects; (3) Teaching of any one topic in General Science; (4) The Science Laboratory; (5) The General Science syllabus in the secondary school; (6) Science Clubs.

REORGANIZATION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

A Critical Study

After a series of revisions of the secondary educational structure, contents, methods of teaching and examinations, at an all-India level and at state levels, the following new pattern of education in India has emerged.[1]

(1) Eight years of integrated Elementary (Basic) education. This stage will generally cover the period from 6 to 14 years, but the last year of this stage may well be used as an exploratory year to find out the aptitude and interests of the pupil.

(2) Three years of Secondary education proper, where there will be marked diversification of courses. This will generally cover the period from 14 to 17 years.

(3) Three years of University education after the higher secondary school, leading to the first degree.

The standard aimed at, at the end of the Secondary level, is that of the present Intermediate class of the University.

Contents of Scheme

The All-India Council for Secondary Education, at its meeting held on 11 January 1956, decided that every pupil in a Higher Secondary School should be required to study three languages, and proposed alternative schemes of language grouping. These language groups make up Section A of the proposed syllabus. Section B consists of Social Studies and General Science including Mathematics. Section C is Crafts. Section D has seven groups: Group 1—Humanities; Group 2—Sciences; Group 3—Technical; Group 4—Commerce; Group 5—Agriculture; Group 6—Fine Arts; and Group 7—Home Science.

Elementary Home Science should be provided as a full subject in Groups 2 (Sciences) and 6 (Fine Arts), in addition to Group 1. Music provided in Group 1 (Humanities) should have the same syllabus content as that under Group 6. It may be either Vocal (Hindustani or Karnatak) or Instrumental. Group 3 (Technical) students will be required to take workshop practice. In Group 4 (Commerce), (*a*) Elements of Commerce and (*b*) Commercial Geography, including Economics and Civics, will be compulsory subjects.

Languages. In respect of Languages, the Council proposes the following schemes: *A* (*1*) The regional language or the mother-tongue, or a composite course of the regional language and the mother-tongue, or a composite course of the regional language and a classical language, or a composite course of the mother-tongue and a

[1] All-India Council for Secondary Education, *Draft Syllabus for Higher Secondary Schools* (Ministry of Education, Government of India, March 1956).

classical language; (*2*) Hindi or English; (*3*) Any modern Indian or European language other than those selected under *A* (*1*) and (*2*).

Alternative Schemes: B (*1*) The regional language or mother-tongue, or a composite course of the regional language and the mother-tongue, or a composite course of the regional language and a classical language, or a composite course of the mother-tongue and a classical language; (*2*) English or a modern European language; (*3*) Hindi for pupils whose mother-tongue or regional language is not Hindi; any other Indian language for pupils whose mother-tongue or regional language is Hindi. In none of the schemes is language to be selected under more than one group. The student should study three different languages.

The scheme contemplates the study of the mother-tongue or the regional language as a single subject in conjunction with the classical language.

Modification Suggested in the Mudaliar Commission's Recommendations

The Secondary Education (Mudaliar) Commission had recommended that the Higher Secondary Education course should be of four years. In the first two years of this four years' course, the 'core' subjects would be Social Studies and General Science and Mathematics. Pupils selecting History or Geography or Elements of Economics and Civics under Section D, would, in the second year, study General Science and Mathematics only (and not Social Studies). Similarly pupils selecting Sciences or Technical subjects or Agriculture under Section D, would, in the second year, study Social Studies only (and not General Science and Mathematics).

The proposal of the Council now is that these 'core' subjects should be made compulsory for all pupils taking up the Higher Secondary Course and that the subjects be studied in all the three years, i.e. Stds IX, X and XI.

The details of the new pattern are in the nature of suggestions only and State Governments are to frame the final scheme for themselves within the broad objectives of the new pattern. Liberal financial grants are promised to State Governments in order to expedite reforms and convert High schools into Higher Secondary schools and Multipurpose schools.

Targets under the Second Five Year Plan

(1) Education to 60 per cent of the children of the age-group 6-11; (2) Education to 19 per cent of the children of the age-group 11-14. (If the targets are reached it will mean an increase of 6.6 million at the Primary stage and 800,000 at the Middle school stage; 60,000 new Primary and 5,000 new Middle schools. 12,000 new Basic schools will form 13 per cent of the total number of Primary and Middle schools.)

This structure will be completed with 250 Multipurpose schools

(established under the First Five Year Plan), to a total of 875 Multipurpose schools under the Second Five Year Plan. The number of High and Higher Secondary schools (which generally include Middle schools) will increase from 10,800 to 11,300 under the Second Five Year Plan. For the 14-17 age-group, the number of pupils will rise from 2.2 million to 2.6 million, forming 10 per cent of the total population in this age-group. In addition to the schools enumerated, there will be 50 Junior Technical schools.

(3) University education under the Second Five Year Plan is also expected to achieve high figures. The First Five Year Plan estimated a rise in the student population at the university stage from 420,000 to 720,000. Degree-holders have increased from 41,000 to 68,918. More is attempted in the Second Plan—Janata colleges, village and district libraries, social education, audio-visual aids and new literature.[1]

Never in the history of education in India was woven so neatly, artistically and completely a grand pattern of 'Education for All'. If only the expected happens and the unexpected does not intervene, India will have, by the end of the Second Five Year Plan, an unprecedented and unequalled educational achievement to her credit.

Some Problems

In the light of our experience of the First Five Year Plan we have to ask ourselves whether there is any reasonable chance of our securing at least the bare minimum. Are we sure that the objectives of the Second Five Year Plan are what we need to achieve? Are we further clear beyond doubt that the methods suggested are the right methods? Is the pattern without any loose ends? In any educational experiment such questions have to be studied without sentiment or emotion.

There are in fact many loose ends left in the pattern presented by the administrators. The experience of the First Five Year Plan does not seem to have been availed of, and the entire educational reform is based on an inherently wrong principle. In India, as in many other Asian countries, education is an economic problem. Our planning suggests that education by itself will solve all national problems—economic, social, industrial and cultural. But how far education is an economic problem is shown by the following facts: (*i*) 'Compulsion' as a method has failed to secure any educational advance. (*ii*) Mere opening of new schools, even though they be Basic schools, does not by itself guarantee continuation of schooling. At best it may induce enrolment. (*iii*) Accessibility to education, at the Middle, High or Higher stage, depends entirely on the economic ability of the pupils. (*iv*) Four out of five High or Higher schools are privately managed and depend on fees as their principal source of revenue.[2]

[1] *Education in Universities in India, 1951–2* (Ministry of Education, Government of India).

[2] *Education in India, 1948–9*, p. 84.

(*v*) Training of teachers is, again, at the cost of the 'trainees' themselves, and hence the percentage of trained teachers to the total number of teachers, at the secondary stage, has risen by one per cent, as against the rise in the total recruitment of 8.7 per cent (only 54.6 per cent of the total number of Secondary teachers were trained in 1951-2.[1] (*vi*) University education, too, depends on fees to the extent of 43.9 per cent in the whole of India, and to the extent of 70 per cent in major universities.[2] (*vii*) The average annual cost per pupil at the Secondary stage is Rs 61.4 and this varies sharply from State to State and from school to school.[3] (*viii*) The average annual cost per pupil at a vocational or technical school is about Rs 213 but varies astonishingly from Rs 6,793.3 in a marine training school to Rs 24.2 in a school for physical education.[4] (*ix*) The economic factor has stilled all enthusiasm and initiative of teachers, as is shown by the numerous demonstrations and strikes resorted to by teachers in different parts of the country. (*x*) Private managements have repeatedly appealed to Governments for timely financial help, as otherwise they face total extinction. (*xi*) Surveys of teachers' and pupils' economic and social conditions undertaken in various States conclusively show that economic factors are at the root of educational regress.

In this brief article more details cannot be given, but it can be definitely stated that the stranglehold of financial stress has adversely affected education at all levels, as is evident in the following facts: (*i*) Primary. There is still 60 per cent wastage. The official interpretation that this wastage is caused by single-teacher schools does not hold good. As an example, wastage is as high as 80 per cent in West Bengal where single-teacher schools form only 1.8 per cent of the total number of primary schools. State Governments have, again, contradictory opinions to offer on this question. The fact is that parents are handicapped economically. No 'pattern' can save the situation.[5] (*ii*) In spite of examination reforms, the results at the end of the Secondary stage have not risen above 50 per cent.[6] This enormous wastage is due to the fact that accessibility to Secondary education is determined by economic ability to the extent of 85 to 90 per cent of the total number of pupils. (*iii*) At the University stage, though degree-holders are 68,918 as against 41,000 at the beginning of the First Five Year Plan, the distribution over various branches of learning is absolutely governed by financial considerations. As an example one can

[1] *Education in India, 1951-2*, vol. I, p. 109.

[2] *Education in Universities in India, 1951-2*, p. 21.

[3] *Education in India, 1951-2*, p. 119.

[4] *Education in India, 1951-2*, p. 192.

[5] *Education in India, 1948-9*, table xx, p. 53. No improvement is reported since.

[6] There was actually a decrease in pass percentages from 47.4 to 46.6. *Education in Universities in India, 1951-2*, vol. I, p. 19.

refer to the striking variation among candidates for Law, Commerce, and Arts, as against Agriculture, and Veterinary Science. Preferences go by parents' economic and social position alone.[1]

The basis of planning for education should be the economic betterment of existing institutions and widening the accessibility to education so as to invert the present ratio of paying and free students. This cannot be achieved without considerably enhancing financial aid, even to keep the existing institutions going. Finances under the Second Five Year Plan do not justify the creation of the new pattern of education advocated by the administrators.

The second loose end is the method of planning. Planning is done without patient research and patterns are evolved and contents of education 're-oriented' almost overnight. A typical example is the concept of a Multipurpose school, without any assessment of the social needs, which vary from locality to locality. Such a school simply means a 'good' school—sufficiently well equipped with teachers, reasonable material aids, conditions favourable to new methods, and a reliable assessment leading a pupil on to a definite beneficial occupation in later life. Planning has been conceived, however, on general platitudes by persons who have not the faintest acquaintance with real school situations. The result is a very loose end—words replaced by more words.

The third loose end is peculiar to India. Educational planning elsewhere is done by educationists. In India one feels that planning for education is done in political gatherings, either by politicians who pose as teachers or by teachers who are politicians by another name. Professor Humayun Kabir, in his Presidential address to the All-India Educational Conference at Delhi, in December 1955, made a candid reference to the death of the true teacher. It is a sad commentary on conditions in India that this revered teacher should himself fall a martyr on the altar of politics. So long as politics govern education, and values are subject to votes, what planning is done will be political rather than educational.

The fourth loose end, and the most important, is the wrong emphasis on materials, types of institution, ideological content and dynamic method, without proper regard to the teacher himself, who is the live centre of all educational dynamics. Ancillary grants are an example, as also are grants for the establishment of new types of schools. The teacher who is to work these institutions, who is to use the new aids and apparatus, and who is to introduce and practise the new dynamic methods, is still waiting to have some relief for himself, some time to study for himself, some opportunity of himself enjoying the life for which he is to prepare his pupils. There are 230,490 teachers in secondary schools in India. The total expenditure on secondary education is Rs 348,635,481. The lowest salaries vary

[1] *Education in Universities in India, 1951-2*, p. 20.

from Rs 60 to Rs 154, and the highest do not exceed Rs 300, to be reached in some cases only after 24 years, if at all.[1]

Some Solutions

A close study of the educational statistics available, and a searching retrospect of our experiences with planning in the past, belie any hope that the new pattern will succeed in India. That there is a real need for re-examination of the present structure of education and possibly for re-casting its contents, may be true; but hasty conclusions will not solve the problem. Let us first investigate the possibilities of (*i*) concentrating on improving existing schools, and letting the head and his colleagues have complete freedom to frame syllabuses, devise methods, effect changes in the organizational pattern, and experiment in new ways of assessing their pupils' progress (This would mean a negation of regimentation from above, the abolition of the medieval practice of inspection, abandoning the system of mass examinations, and, instead, showing complete trust in the teaching profession.); (*ii*) encouraging experiments in individual schools under the guidance of such organized bodies as the Teachers' and Headmasters' Associations and Colleges of Education; (*iii*) giving up attempts at uniformity and standardization (For such a vast country like India, where a State is as large as an independent nation in Europe or America, uniformity is absurd.); (*iv*) making all-India educational associations more realistic and thereby setting up a body of professional people who will help each other by mutual examination and close cooperation; (*v*) releasing education from the stranglehold of politics, and making educationists responsible for their expert task; (*vi*) treating education as an economic problem, instead of making education the solution to all national problems; (*vii*) spending more on educational research and less on educational administration.

For a period of at least ten years we feel there should be a respite to educationists from constant changes and reorganizations. This hope will depend for its fulfilment on two virtues among the administrators —tolerance and patience. An empire may be conquered and a flag hoisted to mark the victory; but in education, no such spectacular demonstration is possible and no easy victories lie within the reach of the silent workers in its cause.

C. N. Patwardhan

[1] *Education in India, 1951-2*, vol. I, p. 114.

HANDWRITING AS A CRAFT

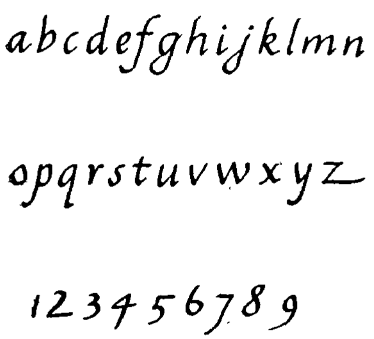
An Immense Disciplinary Force

ANYONE who has had the experience of marking examination papers in India must be conversant with the awful scribble that passes for handwriting in the majority of papers. Most teachers of English, I suppose, are more or less concerned about this problem, but it is usually difficult to approach it in a constructive way. The negative approach —'This is no good, that's not neat' etc.—has no real effect in the end. It is surely time that we made a concerted effort to improve the handwriting of the children in our schools because this is something which touches the work in every subject, and as such is the direct concern of every teacher. If children can be taught to have some regard for the beauty of a page of writing, some feeling that the art of good handwriting is not only good manners but also a delightful aesthetic experience in itself, they will have gained a very real advantage which will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives. Handwriting is indeed the craft for Everyman, and nothing could be more suitable for those schools in India which are badly in need of the advantages of good craft education, but are often handicapped by their lack of space, materials or teachers. This is a craft which any teacher of English can learn in a few months; and it is a craft well worth learning, for the teacher who writes well not only has the satisfaction of being able to give his pupils creative experience of the highest order, but also has for his own enjoyment a craft which he can practise every day, and which requires no special equipment and no special allocation of time. His everyday work takes on an added interest, and the writing of a note, the dull routine report or exercise correction, becomes something in which he can delight. While naturally skill in English handwriting is the province of the English teacher, such a skill will almost certainly have some effect on the child's work in other subjects. A child who writes well in English classes is not likely to allow itself the doubtful luxury of ugly work in the Hindi or Mathematics class; and a certain measure of cooperation between teachers of different subjects will surely add to the success of any attempts to improve handwriting throughout the school.

Calligraphy, or the art of formal handwriting, has always held an important place in the ancient civilizations of the world, mainly perhaps because the majority of early calligraphic specimens have been produced in an effort to perpetuate religious texts. The first mention of writing as an art in India occurs in the Buddhist *Vinaya-piṭaka*, and it is interesting to note that writing was the only art which the *theris* or Buddhist nuns were allowed to practise. The art of calligraphy was, of course, common to most monastic communities all over the world, and to a certain extent it remained an esoteric art until education became general.

As teachers of handwriting we are at once faced with the problem of what kind of handwriting we should teach. Most adults are the victims of a number of bad writing habits acquired in their youth: but the eradication of these habits is not the formidable job it appears to be, if tackled in the right way. The majority of schools teach, if they teach anything, a copperplate writing which is a derivative of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century copperplate hands. But the weight of present-day opinion, in England at any rate, must persuade us to give acceptance to what is known as humanistic cursive, or italic. This hand has been taught in England with great success, and many teachers are convinced of its suitability from every point of view as a hand to be taught in schools. It should be stressed that the teaching of a cursive script, as opposed to print script, from the very beginning of the child's attempts at writing, is extremely important. In my experience children who start with print script find it difficult to change over to any kind of cursive handwriting; and sometimes they never do change over, but continue to write print script for the rest of their lives.

The first requirement of the handwriting that we teach our children is that it should be legible, even when written quickly. One great disadvantage of a hand such as copperplate is that it easily becomes illegible unless written with extreme care or clerkly accuracy, in which case it tends to become mechanical and can be produced more easily on the typewriter. Italic, however, if taught carefully from the beginning, enables the child to write legibly and beautifully even when writing at speed. I have given some examples of this kind of handwriting in the accompanying plate; the forms are not arbitrary, but the most important essential I consider to be the angularity. This angularity is especially important in India, I think, because the roundness of writing (in the work of Marion Richardson, for instance) tends to illegibility even in the normal hand: but in India, certainly in South India where the handwriting of the mother-tongue is usually made up of circles and half-circles, English writing often becomes rounded out of all recognition.



I have seen English work of university students which, at a hasty glance, looked exactly like Telugu or Kannada. Legibility and beauty are, therefore, the essential requirements of any handwriting we teach our children. Speed is not so important: the old rule of writing every word without a pen-lift was mainly to ensure increased speed, but I suppose that speedy writing in the case of the majority of children means hasty writing, with its attendant crop of English mistakes. If we can persuade our children to write carefully they

may also produce careful English—surely an advantage. Moreover, careful handwriting in many cases means careful spelling; the hand writes and feels words as well as the eye, and children who have been trained to write slowly and beautifully will rarely spell badly. But conformity to a fixed form of the letters in the early stages is essential; only when the child has learned to write can it be given freedom in the formation of certain letters, the use of swash capitals and other decorative forms.

Penmanship is another important branch of this craft which is generally neglected. I myself have found that a pencil is quite an adequate tool in the initial stages, but at some time or other the transition to writing in ink must be made, and this too often results in a multitude of ink-stained desks and floors, and broken bottles. If, however, the craft aspect of writing is stressed, the difficulties can be easily overcome: many districts in India can supply reed pens (*qalam*), or at any rate quills, and the cutting and using of these pens can form an interesting and worth-while introduction to writing in ink. From these beginnings the transition to steel nibs is not very difficult.

Much has been written and said on the subject of nibs and pens for the use of school children: while the chisel-shaped nib is obviously the best tool for italic writing, as it so easily gives a pleasant variation in the width of pen-strokes, it is not, in my view, of paramount importance. What is important is that the writing instrument should not be flexible, in the way that old-fashioned steel nibs were flexible, producing a variation in the width of the pen-stroke only by variation of the pressure used: this variation of pressure is tiring when carried out conscientiously; but if it is omitted the writing is unpleasant to look at. Good writing can be done with a pencil or a fountain pen, and on occasions even with a ball-point. One or two talks by the teacher (if convenient in the mother-tongue) will help to stimulate discussion and experiment and provide a foundation for the realization of writing as a craft. The historical and cultural background, essential in the teaching of craft, is often neglected. In most cases, especially with regard to handwriting, the collection of suitable pictures and material for these background talks is so easy, and of such great interest to the children, that there seems to be no possible excuse for its omission.

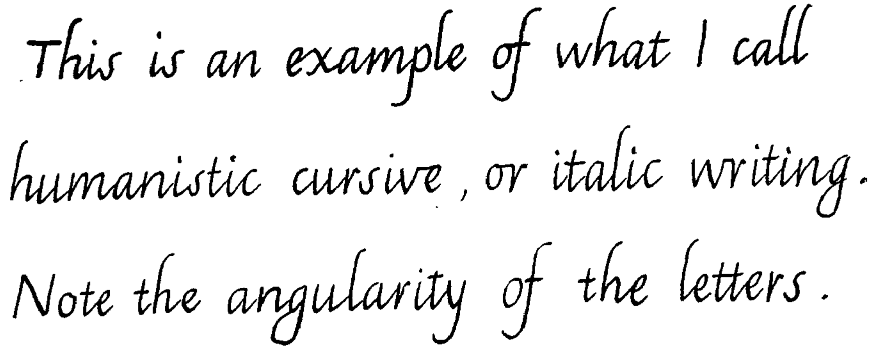
Another aspect of writing which is of the utmost importance is correct posture: the average class will certainly yield up its full quota of twisted spines, books at right angles to the desk, heads on the page, squinting eyes and protruding tongues. Many cases of weak sight are aggravated by bad posture and bad light, and it is an important duty of the teacher to remedy this state of affairs by seeing that children start learning to write in the correct posture. A year of careful supervision by the teacher will ensure that children sit well for the rest of their lives.

Lines, spacing and margins are also important if the craft of good writing is to be a serious factor in the aesthetic education of the child. I find that lined paper is very useful in the early stages of learning handwriting, and in my opinion the child should not be expected to use the ordinary plain ruled exercise book for at least a year. Capitals should be clear and plain at first: children can be shown examples of good swash capitals at a later stage, but they should also be shown how, unless carefully and sparingly used, these capitals can develop into the nonsensical and often illegible monsters of the copperplate tradition.

It seems very clear to me that children should not be taught to write at all when they start to learn English; a certain number of writing *patterns* can be used (the writing patterns in the books of Marion Richardson are excellent, and should be carefully studied by all teachers of handwriting), but the children should not be taught to read or write for at least three months.

Good writing in children depends on their initial teaching; and if we as teachers approach writing as a craft, in the true spirit of craftsmanship, we shall be giving the children something which will be of value to them for the rest of their lives. The late W. R. Lethaby (quoted in the *Handwriting Manual* of Alfred Fairbank[1]) wrote: 'First, we—that is, everybody—should recognize his own handwriting as an art—an amazing art really—to be improved rather than degraded. This partly for its own sake, and also because *it is only from a general* interest in, and recognition of, art that any improvement in the forms of the things we produce, from pots to cities, can spring up. Common interest in the improvement of ordinary writing would be an immense disciplinary force: we might reform the world if we began with our own handwriting, but we certainly shall not unless we begin somewhere.'

David Horsburgh



[1] Dryad Press.

A BOOK WEEK

A Project on Children's Reading

In an age when the cinema, the radio and television are trying to oust the printed word in the race for instruction and amusement, a heavy responsibility lies on those in charge of the education of the young.

Children must not only be given the best that is available in books but must be guided in their thinking, judgement and discrimination. Good books must satisfy their recreational, intellectual and spiritual needs. It is not enough to have a well-stocked library in a school. The most important factor is an enthusiastic staff who can make books live for the child.

Indifferent teachers are inclined to put all children in the same groove, and expect them to read the same books at the same ages with the same amount of pleasure. They think in terms of the normal child but what one normal child likes is not what another equally normal child will read and enjoy. In the daily routine of an average teacher's life at school the field of reading is usually narrowed down to his own subject or class, and he has little time to look around and browse among the other books housed in the school library.

It was in this background that the idea of a Book Week was conceived in this school[1]. It eventually resulted in one of our most successful and educationally effective projects.

This is an account of the project, the main aim of which was to get children, teachers, parents and the public interested and better acquainted with books for children and to encourage children themselves to read and enjoy good books.

The Project

The project took the form of a Book Week with an exhibition of children's books as its central feature. The exhibition was housed in a large public hall and kept open for a week. It proved popular and was visited by almost four thousand people.

Each day of the exhibition culminated in an hour's programme which was essentially connected with children's books and children's reading. One evening the programme consisted of a talk to parents and the public about children's books. A couple of evenings were devoted to films on children's books and children's libraries. Another evening was a story hour for children. This was a playback of a tape-recording which had been previously done in the school and in which the juniors had participated. On yet another evening the audience was entertained to dramatic performances presented by the children. These performances were about books where Jo and Meg and Heidi, Peter Pan, Robin Hood and the Pied Piper came to life.

[1] The Alexandra Girls' English Institution, Bombay.

Excerpts from plays studied during the year were also performed by the seniors.

By the time the project was finished, it had expanded to proportions far beyond our expectations.

Organization

The organization of the project involved many problems, the chief of which was to get the staff and pupils interested. A good three months had been spent by the Principal in collecting ideas, literature and matter for the staff. A section of the staff-room was set aside, where books, pamphlets, cuttings, literature and other material were displayed throughout the eight months that the project was being worked out. Several full and group staff meetings were necessary, and in the beginning there was a considerable amount of haziness in our minds, as to what exactly the result was going to be. But things sorted themselves out little by little and a rough plan began to emerge, and with it simultaneously the enthusiasm of the staff. The staff were asked to work in groups, and a time-limit was given for submitting to the Principal a clear plan of what each group was going to do. At the outset however, that is at the beginning of the academic year, the staff had been asked to keep careful and correct records of what books their pupils read, which were the favourites, what percentage of the class read books, and so on. Thus the staff had individual responsibilities as well as group responsibilities. One group was set apart to do research on the Story of the Book, and this involved the preparation of a project on the history of the book and printing from the earliest times to the present day. Another group was to work on the history of libraries in India, a third was to prepare a brochure on the history of the school. The Art teacher was to concentrate on helping the staff and pupils in the preparation of charts and posters, and the making of book-marks, programmes and book jackets, while the Craft teachers were to concentrate on getting the children to mend and repair and make presentable the much-handled library books that were to be exhibited.

As far as the pupils were concerned, a number of informal and friendly talks had to be given to them by both the Principal and staff. What actually succeeded in finally arousing their enthusiasm was the throwing open of several competitions, individual, class and House-wise. Competitions were organized for the best posters, for the best book-marks, for the best book jackets, for the best models, and for the best class manuscript magazines. Preparing for these competitions caused much activity and the results were amazing and far beyond our expectations.

The second problem of organization was the time factor. Incidentally the project took eight months to complete and involved a great deal of work for both the teachers and the pupils. It was absolutely necessary for much of the work to be integrated with the regular

routine work of the school and worked into the school time-table. The scheduled syllabuses had to be set aside in some subjects, but this did no harm at all. As a matter of fact it introduced a considerable amount of variety and interest in the routine work of the pupils and staff. Thus the Art lessons were devoted to making posters, captions and charts according to the children's abilities. The craft lessons were devoted to making book-marks, mending books and making clothes for the dolls that were to be dressed as nursery rhyme characters. Even the English lessons now had an added interest; for the best stories and essays were to be selected for the class manuscript magazines, which contained something representative of every subject. Then there was preparation and rehearsal for dramatic performances.

It would be wrong to state that all the work of the project was done during regular school hours. A great deal of it was, but both pupils and staff had to spend a considerable amount of time after school hours and on holidays to complete the work. In the last two months the school time-table had to be adjusted. The periods for each subject were shortened and the extra hour or two thus made available was devoted entirely to Book Week work.

The Exhibition

The main feature of the Book Week was of course the exhibition of the books themselves. These were exhibited in sections, such as reference books; English books were divided into primary, middle and high school, history, geography, mathematics and science, art and craft and music; and there were also Gujarati and Hindi sections. The school library consists of about eight thousand books and a careful selection had to be made for each section.

Posters, charts and captions were made as colourful as possible. They showed several aspects of children's reading, both graphically and pictorially. A good few showed statistics of children's reading during the year; others illustrated why children should read, how to read books, how to treat books, uses of a library and other allied topics. Many of these posters and charts with attractive captions had been done by the children themselves, a few by the teachers and a few by outside artists who merely executed the ideas given by us. We did not mind requisitioning outside help as the main idea of the project was to emphasize children's reading and not to show our children's abilities in making beautiful pictures.

Each section with its books was arranged in a different way so as to lend variety, depth and beauty to the exhibition. To give a few examples: The Science section was illustrated by a very large poster labelled 'Out of a Book of Science'. Interesting and catchy facts of science were boldly represented in a pictorial form on this poster, and the books from which these facts were taken were exhibited below. The senior school fiction section was illustrated by a large poster headed 'Why We Like These'. Several small and artistic jackets of

books which were favourites with the children were pasted on a large sheet of cardboard. Inside these folders were brief reviews written by the seniors about why they liked those particular books. The Kindergarten and Primary section had a large folder frieze above the books displayed, illustrating such children's favourites as *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Three Little Pigs.* The stories on these friezes had been written by the pupils themselves as part of their English and writing lessons.

'Our Regular Visitors' section exhibited the journals, papers and magazines which are regular features of the school. Attractive captions illustrated which picture papers, journals and magazines were most popular with the pupils.

The Nursery Town was one of the most popular sections of the exhibition and attracted a great deal of attention. A considerable amount of time in the junior Craft classes had been devoted to dressing up dolls as favourite nursery rhyme characters. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed this and those who had taken no share in the making of the clothes were given the job of taking visitors round Nursery Town and acting as guides.

Models were interspersed among the exhibits. Model-making in cardboard, paper, clay and straw was the subject of a competition for both juniors and seniors. The models were restricted to scenes or characters from favourite books. Some very attractive models were produced of *Treasure Island*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Rapunzel*, *Peter Pan* and *Pinocchio*, of the Globe Theatre of Shakespearean days and 'the bishop's candlesticks' scene from *Les Miserables.* The teachers helped with ideas, but the execution of these ideas was the responsibility of the pupils, and the results were excellent.

From the pupils' point of view the most enjoyable part of the Book Week was the Dramatics and Fancy Dress Competition. All the items on the programme concerned books with which the children were familiar. The highlight of this feature was the Fancy Dress Parade which was organized in the form of a competition. Pupils were asked to represent a book character or groups of characters. Almost a hundred pupils participated. Both the ideas and the representation were entirely the pupils' own with no help from the staff.

After the Book Week had ended we all felt that the hard work and time devoted to it had been well worthwhile. The object we had set out with had been more than achieved, for not only had pupils and teachers been brought closer to books but many parents had perhaps realized the value of giving the best reading opportunities to their children. Immense cultural and educational benefits had been attained. The greatest reward was, we felt, that every individual pupil and teacher had had an opportunity to participate; and, most of all, every one of us had enjoyed it.

MARGARET BENJAMIN

SOME PROBLEMS OF MULTIPURPOSE SCHOOLS

Need for Careful Examination

THE reorganization of secondary education on the lines proposed by the Ministry of Education is admittedly considered to be a stern necessity. The problems of organization, up-grading, staffing, etc., of the High schools as well as the multipurpose schools under this new scheme are many and of a varied nature. It is the purpose of this article to deal with some of the problems.

I. THE SELECTION OF SCHOOLS FOR CONVERSION

According to the Ministry of Education's scheme five hundred selected High schools were to be converted into multipurpose schools each with at least two units of diversified courses during the remaining months of the first Five Year Plan period. It is not known what progress has been made in this direction and how selection has been made. Selection should be made only after an overall survey of the actual needs by acknowledged experts, keeping in view an agreed basis of criteria, such as good academic record, need of the locality, good building on a suitable site permitting further expansion with easy approach from nearby areas by transport arrangements, stable finances, and equipment. It will be a mistake not to be careful about the selection of schools for experimenting on the newer type of secondary education, for errors of policy, or of planning in a haphazard manner, committed now, will take decades to remedy. So before policy or administrative provision for the new set-up is translated into terms of organization, i.e., before it is worked out in detail in our development plans for overall conversion, its widest implications should be meticulously examined by experts and all concerned in the work of education.

II. PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE STAFF

During the interim period of ten years from now on there is bound to be a down-grading of some existing High schools with poor academic records and unstable finances, to Junior High schools. This will result in the consequent drafting of their teachers to lower forms, thus disturbing their seniority and possibly the salary-structure. So care should be taken by the Government to ensure that such steps may not cause any deterioration in the overall standard of education. There should be no withdrawal or even restriction of educational facilities by such demotion or down-grading, nor should there be dismissal of permanent and qualified members of the staff who cannot be fitted into the newer pattern of Higher Secondary schools.

The question of selection of staff is no less important and urgent. No educational advance is possible until the present teaching force is substantially reinforced by qualified men and women entertained on adequate and attractive pay scales. It is, indeed, a fact that men and

women with first-class qualifications, especially in science and technology, are no longer being attracted to the profession because of the present low status of teachers in the community and the poor salary-structure. It is a mistake to think that absence of depth of scholarship in our teachers for the newer type of secondary schools can be made up by knowledge of methods acquired in a Training College. In view of the critical part which education must play in a democratic society, the teacher has certainly a stronger claim than most in demanding early adjustment. It is suggested that those younger graduates who can improve their academic and professional qualifications should be encouraged by higher salaries to improve themselves so as to fit into the staff of the newer types of secondary schools. The work of progressive up-grading should go hand in hand with the starting of multipurpose schools during a period of intensive preparation by effecting improvements in accommodation, staffing, equipment, library, craft teaching, etc. Subjects of special importance such as General Science, Social Studies and Crafts should be taught with a reorientation of aims and teaching methods, and to make this possible, grants for improving laboratories for General Science and for providing equipment and appliances for such crafts as have a local importance in the area served by the High Schools selected for conversion during the ten-year period, should be made available from the State funds, as well as from the Centre.

As a necessary preliminary step to the recasting of courses of study in these selected High schools and to make education more practical and realistic, certain changes in staffing and equipment for the teaching of crafts in the middle school stage, i.e., Class VI to VII, should be made at once and additional teachers for craft teaching should be drafted to these selected High schools. Headmasters who are selected for appointment as Principals, teachers and inspecting officers for the new types of secondary schools should go in for intensive short courses on the proposed draft syllabuses, curricula, mode of selection for bifurcation, organization and methodology of the new pattern of multipurpose schools. The teacher training programmes of all existing Training Colleges or Institutes of Education for men and women should be immediately reoriented for this purpose. In future our Training Colleges must not develop as segregated institutions. There should be increasing coordination not only with the University Training Department but also with the general intellectual, aesthetic and social activities of the Universities in order that our future teachers may cultivate a spirit of open-mindedness and intellectual alertness. This will be difficult to cultivate if Training Colleges develop as separate institutions. Reorientation or coordination courses must be arranged also for the technical staff, so that they may know what actually they are expected to teach, keeping in view the objective of giving an occupational bias to the trainees. The training of Career Masters or Mistresses, of Guidance Officers and Psychologists, should be immediately undertaken by all

Training Colleges and Institutes of Education. There is a great dearth of trained and experienced psychologists and the lacuna is not likely to be removed in the course of many years to come, unless the existing Training Colleges or Institutes of Education come forward to train some young persons for this type of work in their post-graduate courses. Unless this is done, it will be impossible for the schools to test the bias and potential capacities of the students for the diversified courses. The Psychological Bureau should construct and standardize scholastic cum intelligence tests for this purpose. The paucity of accommodation, equipment and accessories, and of trained personnel, which cannot be made up within a short period, will continue to be a barrier in the way of proper instruction in the different courses of study proposed under the scheme. All training institutions should initiate and undertake curricular research in their demonstration schools. The draft syllabuses for Higher Secondary schools that have just been released should be the subject for research, which should be undertaken at once.

III. The Problem of Diversification of Courses

If we take the average number of new courses to be provided for in each multipurpose school, the choice of the courses must be made according to actual needs and circumstances of the catchment area for each such school. It should be understood that diversification is admissible under seven groups, out of which three subjects in one group are to be chosen. The seven groups are—(1) Humanities, (2) Science, (3) Technical, (4) Agricultural, (5) Commerce, (6) Fine Arts and (7) Home Science. If each multipurpose school is to offer at least two of these seven groups of diversified courses, then in fixing its choice on the two particular groups it must ensure that there is a local demand for the products to be turned out by each such school and that they can be absorbed in the local industries after further training as paid or unpaid apprentices.

IV. Problems of Organization

The fundamental problem of a multipurpose school is how to organize the school and plan the buildings, apart from complications of curriculum and time-tables, so that a unity of spirit among the boys or girls and the staff can be established and maintained. There will be boys and girls of high, average and low intelligence, every one of whom is to be made to feel that he or she is of equal importance. Each has to be given the opportunity of developing his or her particular talents, personal as well as artistic, academic and practical. As the staff of a multipurpose school will be large, it is equally important that a unity of spirit should pervade the staff also. How the staff can be welded to form a unity will depend upon the personal influence of the Principal.

Another basic problem in organization is the type or pattern of multipurpose school to be developed: Is it to be a set of Grammar,

Secondary Modern and Secondary Technical high schools separately organized as in England? Or is it to be multilateral, with clearly defined alternative courses pursued entirely as separate units in the same school? Or is it to be comprehensive, i.e., providing for diversified courses in separate blocks of buildings with attached workshops but with partly integrated courses, organized in the same school?

A comprehensive school can be organized so that pupils not only mix on social occasions inside the assembly hall but also do some work together irrespective of varying degrees and kinds of ability. To my mind this kind of comprehensive school, such as those in Scotland, England and America, has certain definite advantages provided that the enrolment does not exceed 750 students. It is capable of providing a richer community life than the multilateral school, offering separate courses of work to children of varying abilities and aptitudes. The richest community is founded on variety, because any social group which contains elements of variety or difference recognized and accepted as such by its members forms a richer community than the flat, uniform group of 'likes'. It is only under such conditions that the school can become colourful and rich. In a comprehensive school, aptitudes and interests can be detected as they mature at different ages in different individuals through psychological tests. A comprehensive school will need a Principal with wide interests, great gifts of delegation and organization, and above all a clear conception of the essentials of a full community life with a determination that his school will solve them. In a predominantly industrial or agricultural area we may organize entirely separate Technical High Schools with attached workshops or agricultural farms as the case may be. Such schools should be reached by an *alternative* technical ladder, like the academic ladder through Primary or Junior Basic, Senior Basic and Junior Technical schools, followed by College of Technology and Technological courses at the highest level in a Technical University. This is most important as the two top layers of the intelligence of the nation's youth must be equally distributed to the academic and the technical side of a national system of education. There was a time when technical education was regarded as an inferior limb of the body educational—as the sort of place to which one sent a boy only when it had become evident that he was incapable of assimilating any of the more fashionable and traditional forms of education. That position has now completely changed.

V. Problems of Site and Accommodation

The next problem is that of a suitable site for the school according to the needs of the locality—of accommodation, building, equipment, construction of technical blocks, assembly hall, workshops, laboratories, etc., within the campus of the school. Room must be found for providing additional classrooms, craft rooms, workshops and special rooms for General Science, Social Studies, besides the Counsellor's or

Guidance Officer's room, the Psychologist's room, House Master's and House Tutor's rooms, agricultural farm and playgrounds, etc.

VI. Problems of Syllabus, Textbooks and Time-tables

The draft syllabuses for Higher Secondary schools both for most of the core subjects and for the diversified courses of the upper school are now ready. It is however suggested that a panel of experts should work out detailed syllabuses in craft and technical subjects also, according to the special needs of each area, as well as the syllabuses for the pre-university and pre-professional courses. All these will need to be adapted to the special needs and requirements of each area before they are determined in their final form. Besides, a syllabus is after all a dynamic thing, so no syllabus can really be prescribed in its final shape and form and even though it is conceded that a certain uniformity of educational standard is desirable in the present context, such uniformity should be maintained in the minimum essentials only. This done, necessary textbooks will have to be written and approved in the manner suggested in the Secondary Education Commission Report. The construction of the time-table for the lower and upper school will also present unique difficulties.

In all these matters it is feared that the steam-roller of uniformity as proposed in the common pattern of secondary education for the whole of India is calculated to stunt the free and normal growth of mind of the students in different parts of the country, as each State system has so far developed according to different traditions, psychological background and objective conditions in the socio-economic structure. Before we embark on this experiment, we must first of all see that it is rooted as far as practicable on our past traditions in education. Our experience in the past has shown that no foreign plant, grafted root and branch on uncongenial soil, has any chance to thrive, unless it takes kindly to the native soil. The structural pattern should as far as practicable be designed after our inherited institutions. It will also be unwise to restrict our experimental schools in their development to predetermined lines according to Western models of tripartite, multilateral or comprehensive schools as in England, Scotland and America. We must evolve our own distinctive lines of growth according to the genius, racial psychology and background and the socio-economic needs of the nation in a technological age.

VII. The Assessment of Special Interests and Aptitudes of Pupils at 11 and Diversified Courses at 14

The age of 11-14 years is the period of diagnoses and of discovery of the particular abilities, aptitudes and interests of adolescence. When the interests and abilities are clearly marked by 11, i.e., directly after completion of the primary (Junior Basic) course, we must meet them by a change of atmosphere, outlook and an appropriate curriculum. We must allow both for early discovery of special abilities

no less than for delayed discovery of 'later blooms', say at 14. Such a discovery will depend on skilled observation over a period of time employed, including intelligence cum scholastic cum vocational tests and scales and cumulative records. The process of differentiation for the appropriate type of secondary education should begin in the later years of the primary stage through effective school records, giving a history of the child's development and containing an objective record of progress (intelligence and other tests). On the basis of these combined verdicts a recommendation should be made that a pupil should continue his education with the type of school or course appropriate to him, due consideration having been given to the wishes of parents and pupils. By the end of two years every pupil should have been sympathetically and skilfully reviewed and, roughly at the age of 14, promotion of suitable pupils should be made into higher forms. Thus by the use of the cumulative records of the primary (basic) schools and by a period of observation and trial in the lower school, differentiation would be possible. But the chief difficulty at the moment is that those measuring instruments (intelligence and vocational or performance tests standardized for use with Indian children) and the particular form of Cumulative Record Card suitable for Indian children are not yet ready for the purpose of selection of pupils either at 11 or at 14. All these are subjects for research in our newly established Psychological Bureaus attached to Training Colleges, where under expert psychological guidance experiments with different kinds of tests, record-cards and interviewing techniques will have to be evolved. If we are serious in our efforts to provide a type of secondary education at 14 to fit each individual pupil's special interests, abilities and aptitudes, we must make it possible for all children who have entered the wrong school or group of diversified subjects to be moved to the right one as soon as this fact is discovered during the interim period until our selection procedure is stabilized by experiments.

VIII. The Present Experimental Stage

At this stage when we lack experience of the new educational system, when secondary education in a new setting is to be tried out for the first time, we should be very careful about our selection of schools to be converted into schools of the newer type. Once selected, schools should be free to experiment. For the planning mind is experimental. As I have said it will be unwise to restrict schools in their development to predetermined lines of organization, curricula, staffing, accommodation, methods, administration, etc. Education is in transition; the concepts of its purpose and its function in society are broadening and deepening and consequently its content, its organization and its methods are in a state of flux. The change-over from the old to the new order of secondary education is a fascinating task fraught with consequences of the highest importance to the future of the nation. To carry it out will require the best and bravest of the nation's manhood and womanhood.

J. Lahiri

TEXTBOOKS

Scholarship, Research and a Seriousness of Purpose —Vitally Necessary

IN INDIA, a textbook is a book prescribed for detailed study as opposed to one meant for supplementary or rapid reading. The books prescribed for study in science, mathematics or economics may also be called textbooks, but the word is specially used for books for detailed study in modern languages and the classics. This is indicative of the emphasis that is to be laid on the text—the exact words, the original language—used in the books for language studies. In other subjects of study, it is the knowledge content that matters, not so much the language in which the knowledge content is couched. If, instead of teaching the prescribed book, the teacher adopts another and teaches the pupils what they are required to learn during the year, the class would not suffer. Such a probability is unthinkable in a course of language study.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of textbooks in a course of intellectual education. Harl R. Douglas, Director, College of Education, The University of Colorado, in his book on *Organization and Administration of Secondary Schools*, writes: 'In the last analysis, with the great majority of teachers, the textbook is a potent determinant of what and how they will teach.' Professors A. S. Barr, William H. Burton and Leo J. Brueckner in their book entitled *Supervision*, remark: 'The textbook is probably the most important educational tool in this country [U.S.A.]'. If that remark is true of the United States and other Western countries, it is more true of India.

In other countries, the teachers show a greater awareness of new methods being devised, new experiments being made and new avenues being explored and opened in different branches of education. In Western countries there are many other sources of acquiring learning, for example, good home training, illustrated magazines, educational tours, educational films and good supplementary readers. In India the teachers and the taught depend almost entirely on textbooks for imparting and acquiring knowledge. The importance of textbooks, therefore, assumes tremendous proportions in this country; but it is a matter of deep regret that this has not been fully recognized up till now. The Mudaliar Commission Report says: 'We are greatly dissatisfied with the present standard of production of school books and consider it essential that this should be radically improved' (p. 96).

The majority of the textbooks in our schools reveal a total ignorance of one of the fundamental principles of textbook preparation. A textbook is closely allied to the method which is to be adopted for teaching it. Nay, it depends almost wholly upon the method of teaching to be employed by the teacher. It should be prepared in accordance with the most effective method of teaching in vogue at

the time. The selection of material, its arrangement in different lessons or chapters and its presentation and grading will all be governed by the method of teaching. The Direct method of teaching a foreign language, the Inductive method of teaching grammar and the science subjects, the Dalton Plan and Project method will all determine the nature of textbooks to be taught according to these methods or systems. The Basic system of education, in principle, should have its special types of textbooks. The principle of correlation is one of the fundamental tenets of the Basic system and the textbooks in different subjects should be correlated with the central craft taught in a school.

While, thanks to the initiative of foreign publishing concerns like the Oxford University Press, Macmillan & Co. and others, we have at our disposal some books written according to the Direct method and Inductive method, we have not any textbooks for Basic schools prepared in the light of the principle of correlation. Some of the crafts taught in the Basic schools are Spinning and Weaving, Agriculture and Woodcraft. Have any textbooks in social studies, languages, mathematics, etc., written round the core of these crafts, come to light so far? Every day our leaders and educationists extol the virtues of the Basic system. They even go so far as to say that it is our unique contribution to the world in the field of education. But have they ever paused to think whether suitable textbooks have been prepared and provided for the Basic system?

When the Reorganization Scheme based on grouping of subjects was introduced in Uttar Pradesh in 1948, it was enunciated that a subject in one group would be taught differently from the same subject in another group. For example, geography in the Literary group would be taught in a different manner from geography under the Scientific group. But was the principle actually followed? Were suitable textbooks for each subject under different groups provided?

An absence of suitable textbooks for the Basic system of education and for the Reorganization Scheme is a severe condemnation of our educational productivity and planning. It reveals the dearth of creative ability among our educationists and educators, want of enterprise among our educational publishers and lack of perspective and vision among our educational administrators.

In our Training schools and colleges we talk a great deal about Dr Dewey's Project method, but we are not able to give any concrete demonstration of the exact shape this system will take when put into practice. No textbooks have been produced to illustrate how knowledge in different subjects will be imparted if the Project method is followed.

In History we talk about the inspirational, the concentric and the source methods of teaching the subject. In Geography also we have the Regional and the Causal methods of teaching. But the textbooks hardly show any awareness of the accredited methods in vogue. It appears as if the writers of the textbooks have never bothered about

these established methods. Not only are there no textbooks written in accordance with generally accepted systems or methods like the Basic system, the Project method, etc., they do not even lend themselves to being used for some of the important principles of teaching. Disregard of the current methods of teaching is one of the most serious flaws of our textbooks.

Selection, grading and arrangement of material is another important problem of textbook preparation. This is to some extent governed by the curriculum, but within the framework determined by the curriculum the textbook writer enjoys full latitude. He has to select material that is suited to the class, that is neither too meagre nor too profuse, that has variety, that omits nothing that is essential, that does not lose sight of the seven cardinal principles of education (namely, health, command of fundamental processes, worthy home-membership, vocational preparation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure and ethical character),[1] that is neither too difficult nor too easy and fits in with the intellectual growth of the students, that is connected with what has been taught before and is to be taught afterwards, that correlates with other subjects. The knowledge content has to be arranged in order of rising difficulty in the successive divisions, lessons or chapters of the textbook. The material has to be presented in such a way as to attract the interest of the students. All this requires intimate knowledge of child psychology, accurate scholarship and study, experimentation and research. To determine what shall be taught to a certain age-group within a given time, and what will precede and follow it, requires much patient work. This would be the work of a lifetime not only of one person but of a group of persons. The Mudaliar Commission has expressed the view that 'the question, therefore, of producing proper textbooks for schools is one which should receive the earnest attention of both the State and Central Governments'. The Commission has recommended the constitution of a high-power committee consisting of a high dignitary of the Judiciary, a member of the Public Service Commission, a Vice-Chancellor, a headmaster or headmistress, two eminent educationists and the Director of Education to ensure the preparation and use of good textbooks.

I feel that much preparatory work is necessary before good textbooks can come into existence. The kind of work described above, i.e., selection and grading of material, can well be entrusted to the Training Colleges and Education Departments of the Universities. They may either be commissioned to do this work or encouraged and financed to undertake it. The idea that a scholar in a subject—a university professor or a learned man in a branch of study—can necessarily prepare a good textbook is fallacious. Scholarship alone will not suffice. Experience, research, knowledge of child psychology and acquaintance with the most effective method of teaching should all go

[1] Paul H. Mark: *Principles of School Administration.*

into the writing of a textbook. Barr, Burton and Brueckner have truly said, 'The preparation of a complete textbook is a formidable task'. The Narendra Deo Committee says that 'the production of any standard textbook should take at least three to five years'.

Proper use of illustrations and the language and style in which the matter is presented are two other problems connected with the preparation of textbooks.

Illustrations, maps and charts are an essential part of the textbook material. They increase the amount of interest that a student takes in the book, they help the reader to visualize the thing described in words and they are an important aid to comprehension. Directions for illustrations have to be given by the writer of the textbook himself and this requires a great deal of thought and pictorial imagination. According to the principles evolved by the California State Curriculum Commission for 1953 for evaluating Basic Reading textbooks, quoted by Harold Spears in *Improving the Supervision of Instruction*: 'The illustrations should contribute to the learning experience of children and (*a*) be simple in form and relatively large, (*b*) be pleasing in colour and sufficient in amount, (*c*) illustrate the story, (*d*) stimulate discussions relative to children's experiences and which lead to the use of the vocabulary to be read, (*e*) meet a good art standard, (*f*) be meaningful and interesting to children, (*g*) represent various socio-economic and racial groups of [American] children.'

The report of the Secondary Education Commission says: 'So far as illustrations are concerned, their present standard and quality are almost a scandal and it is necessary that both the Central and State Governments should take a direct interest in their improvement.' The Commission has recommended that the Central Government should either set up a new institution or help an existing Art School to develop a special course to train promising artists in the technique of book illustration. It has also recommended that the Central and, if possible, the State governments should build up and maintain a library of books and good illustrations.

While the problem of language, style and vocabulary is of utmost importance in language books, in other subjects also it is not to be neglected. Education should train a person to express himself in polished and effective language and the prescribed textbooks should provide an example and training. The California State Curriculum Commission already referred to has laid down the following rules about language and style:

1. The vocabulary should be systematically controlled and drawn from word lists which have been developed through research studies of children's interest and abilities.
2. There should be a carefully planned and consistent introduction and repetition of new words to promote mastery. This should not be done in a manner that decreases interest.

3. Sentence structure must be simple and direct.
4. Paragraphs should be short and well-organized.

A great deal of work on the selection and grading of vocabulary and sentence structures has been done in the West. Even sentence patterns have been formulated and graded and it has been determined at what stage a particular sentence structure should be introduced.

In this State, the Central Pedagogical Institute, Allahabad, has done some pioneer work in English for Junior High school classes and it is hoped the work will be continued until the vocabulary and sentence patterns for High school classes are also determined. Other groups of persons or Departments and Institutions should direct their attention towards this field of research.

The 'format' of the textbook and aids to instruction are two other important aspects of textbook preparation. Gertrude Whipple, as quoted by Barr, Burton and Brueckner, has inferred from her study of the items considered in selection of textbooks that 'There is practically unanimous agreement concerning the importance of "content", "physical make-up" and "aids to instruction".'

The physical make-up includes the type, binding, paper, arrangement of pages, lines, illustrative material, spacing of words and letters, size of the book, width of margin, general appearance, shape, size and clearness of marginal notes, index and weight of the book. It is not difficult to imagine the thrill of joy that an attractively got-up book brings to the student. This aspect of the work is mainly the concern of the publishers.

The Mudaliar Commission comments on the physical make-up of our textbooks: 'We are greatly dissatisfied with the present standard of production of school books. Most of the books submitted and prescribed are poor specimens in every way—the paper is usually bad, the printing is unsatisfactory, the illustrations are poor and there are numerous printing mistakes. We are convinced that this state of things will continue unless the Education Departments take a direct interest in it.'

Aids to instruction are the concern of the author. They help the assimilation of knowledge and are essential for both the teacher and the taught. They focus attention on the salient features of the lesson and provide useful material for homework. The author has to pay due attention to aids to instruction. The nature of these is determined by the subject for which they are prepared, but some of the general aids to instruction are the following: study exercises, hints to the teacher, index, table of contents, references and bibliography, tests, preface, glossary, pronunciation aids, introductory paragraphs, answers in mathematics, notes at the end, remedial material, drill material, and review exercises.

In the United States several standards have been fixed for the scientific appraisal of the vocabulary of textbooks, their contents, their

format, their difficulty of materials, aids to instruction, the way in which they are used and the amount of interest they arouse among the students. Such studies and evaluations help in the production of good textbooks. It is time that the training institutions and Education Departments in India took up the work of developing criteria for the appraisal of different aspects of textbooks.

Gertrude Whipple in her paper entitled 'Procedures Used in Selecting Text Books', published in the *Elementary School Journal* has classified the items considered in the selection of textbooks. It will be of interest to reproduce some of the salient points of her classification:

I. Content

(*a*) ease of comprehension
(*b*) value
(*c*) scope
(*d*) abundance of material

II. Physical make-up

(*a*) type
(*b*) binding
(*c*) arrangement of pages
(*d*) paper
(*e*) lines
(*f*) illustrative material
(*g*) spacing of words and lines
(*h*) size
(*i*) width of margin
(*j*) general appearance
(*k*) shape
(*l*) Index
(*m*) weight

III. Aids to Instruction

(*a*) study exercises
(*b*) graphic material
(*c*) index
(*d*) table of contents
(*e*) provision for efficient use by teacher
(*f*) references and bibliography
(*g*) tests and norms
(*h*) preface
(*i*) pupil material
(*j*) glossary
(*k*) pronunciation aids
(*l*) remedial material
(*m*) drill material

IV. Method

(*a*) development of reading habits and skills
(*b*) correlation with other subject-matter and activities
(*c*) recognition of group and individual differences
(*d*) provision for enrichment of vocabulary
(*e*) flexibility of method
(*f*) recognition of principles of psychology
(*g*) opportunity for pupils to discover cause and effect
(*h*) attention to pupil interest
(*i*) provision for supervised study

V. Objectives

(*a*) harmony with educational aims
(*b*) desirable attitudes and economical habits and skills
(*c*) strong motives for and permanent interest in reading
(*d*) objectives of the course of study
(*e*) rich and varied experience
(*f*) vision of man in relation to his environment
(*g*) ideals of high-grade human living

VI. Organization (of material)

(*a*) organization round significant problems
(*b*) psychological rather than logical organization

VII. Author or Authors

(*a*) experience and reputation
(*b*) training and previous publications
(*c*) scholarship

VIII. Suitability to specific needs

IX. Special features

X. Price

The above criteria should be kept in mind while selecting textbooks for different classes. Sometimes no choice is left to the head and assistants in the selection of textbooks but often they have to choose one or two out of a given list. There is a growing tendency among educational thinkers to advocate greater freedom to the teacher and student in the selection of books. The Mudaliar Commission thinks that 'textbooks should not be prescribed for every subject'.

C. H. Judd in his paper entitled 'The Significance for Textbook Making of the Newer Concepts in Education' published in the *Elementary School Journal,* quoted by Barr, Burton and Brueckner, makes a strong point in favour of flexibility of reading material when he says that 'children have a right to many books in each subject'. I believe that a variety of books would not only curb the corruption prevalent in the textbook market but would also improve the quality

by encouraging competition. It would also place better material before the teachers and students. If the best portions from different textbooks are recommended for study, the students would be benefited. In preparing a complete textbook, fulfilling all the requirements of the subject, the matter is levelled down to mediocrity.

The responsibility for selection of textbooks lies on the shoulders of the Principal. But he should share the responsibility with his colleagues. It would be better if he constituted committees for the selection of textbooks for different subjects and classes. Harl R. Douglas in his book on *Organization and Administration of Secondary Schools* has quoted the following steps suggested by J. B. Edmonson for use in High Schools.

1. Secure from the teachers a statement of their criticism of the books to be replaced.
2. Advise teachers to read reports and studies relating to new materials in the subject under discussion. Call a meeting and discuss what should be the aims and scope of material in the subject.
3. Secure samples of recent textbooks.
4. Get the books examined by the committee which are to select the best five.
5. After the best five have been chosen, ask each of the teachers to compare them critically with regard to

   (*a*) appeal to students
   (*b*) kind and value of teaching aids
   (*c*) accuracy of scholarship
   (*d*) extent of the use of results of scientific studies of the subject-matter
   (*e*) success of the author in selecting and organizing materials in terms of the aims and objectives of the course
   (*f*) quality of cover, binding, mechanical make-up
   (*g*) quality of paper
   (*h*) quality of printing

6. Ask that a committee of three teachers and the Principal study these comparisons and recommend a first and second choice.
7. Submit the report of the teachers and the Principal to the Superintendent for his approval and transmission to the Board of Education.

The steps suggested above may be fruitfully adopted in our institutions with some modifications.

A question frequently being asked today is whether the Government should have the monopoly of publishing textbooks. Both the Mudaliar Commission and the Expert Committee consisting of an International Team appointed to review the recommendations of the Mudaliar Commission, have expressed themselves against the proposal. The

Mudaliar Committee says, 'all political and other extraneous influences must be eschewed in the selection of textbooks'. The International Team of experts opines, 'We do not consider it desirable that State Governments and educational authorities should take up the production of textbooks'. The Acharya Narendra Deo Committee is also of the same opinion.

Although the State should not monopolize the publication of textbooks, it 'cannot divest itself of its responsibility to see that only standard books are being used in schools' according to the Narendra Deo Committee Report.

Frequent changes in the prescribed textbooks are undesirable. 'We find no justification for such quick changes,' states the Mudaliar Commission. Normally a new textbook should follow a new method of teaching accepted in the field. In India a new textbook follows monetary and commercial considerations and interests.

The Government has taken some steps to stop corruption in the field of textbooks but an atmosphere should be created in which research, experimentation and serious work develop. The members of the Textbooks and Curriculum committees should be men of honesty, scholarship and expert knowledge in their field. Those publishers should be encouraged who cooperate in the work of providing the best material to the students and subordinate their money-making instinct to social service.

HRIDAYA NARAYAN SINGH

GOOD READING

Gives Knowledge and Increases Power

PERHAPS never before in the history of India has it been so important to be well-informed—about things in general, and politics in particular, for the day-to-day situation in many parts of the world changes so rapidly that one has to read in order to keep abreast of what is going on, and to be able to discuss matters intelligently. This is especially true today, when we wish to take our place, as an enlightened nation, by the side of other progressive nations. With this in view, our leaders are charting out a programme of education for Indian citizens, besides putting forward various gigantic schemes in the fields of industrial development, public health, food supply, sanitation and housing projects for the welfare of our needy millions.

At a time when world politics are in a turmoil, and the balance of power is, with great difficulty, being maintained, it is the wise person who arms himself with a knowledge of what is taking place—not only in distant lands but also in the mother-country itself. We have not to be blind to the fact that only a very small percentage of our electorate are sufficiently educated to take an active interest in the important political events of the day, or the ever-new achievements in medicine, science or industry. Only such people may be said to be really informed. In view of this situation, and the fact that we are pledged to a democratic form of government, it becomes all the more important that our people be educated to understand the magnitude and variety of our problems, understand the efforts being made—by the Government, as well as by public and private bodies—to solve them, act intelligently with regard to them and thus do their share in the construction of a New India. Therefore, the present programmes for basic and adult education are steps in the right direction for they will fill a very urgent need. Today large numbers of persons are eagerly availing themselves of the opportunity to learn, and thus lift themselves from the mire of ignorance, superstition and apathy in which they still wallow. It is most encouraging to note how many industrial and office workers are taking advantage of Night Schools during their spare time in their effort to better their lot.

In order that we inculcate a desire for wider knowledge on a variety of subjects, it is essential that we *train* our future citizens to *read daily* with special reference to those subjects in which each one is particularly interested. A long period of time, at one stretch, is neither advisable nor necessary, for a child's span of attention is short, and hence he is apt to get bored and uninterested if forced to concentrate for periods beyond his physical and mental capacity. Instead, fifteen minutes to half an hour, whenever possible, is quite sufficient to help him to acquire much useful and up-to-date knowledge on

divers topics. As our people, in general, are not in the habit of reading daily, it is high time that we start to cultivate this most desirable of habits from an early age, and who are better fitted to set a worthy example, and instruct in this field, than parents and teachers? It is indeed their proud privilege to mould the receptive young mind in the right direction, and aid him to appreciate the finer types of literature, both ancient and modern. We know that children, by nature, are imitative and quick to learn, and consciously or unconsciously pattern their tastes upon those they admire, love and respect.

Hence, as discrimination in choice, ability to judge and reading taste are based on past experience, it is vital to *condition* a person from childhood onwards so that he will make a proper selection from the varied materials tantalizingly displayed before him. 'Teachers must meet students where they are but never leave them there. Growth at all levels of ability must be provided for. This means the growth of the best students as well as the poorest', both intellectually and scholastically.

Then, 'as age-levels change, as needs and interests change, reading programmes and habits must also change,' says Edgar Dale, and it is but natural that this should be so, for a static state is not possible. Physically and mentally we either progress and gain stature, or retrogress and decay. Therefore, magazines and periodicals must meet the varied intellectual requirements of the young and the old of both sexes, and also cater to a catholicity of tastes.

In guiding the reading taste of the youth of our country, teachers should take care to *expose* their preferences, but not *impose* them. 'The road to good taste in magazine reading is not a straight, narrow, highway. Children and young people do a great deal of searching around before they settle down to that which will receive their sustained attention.' Because of this perfectly natural and normal tendency inherent in all human beings, our chief concern should be only with the general direction in which they are travelling on the road to good reading.

A taste in good reading is cultivated by free but disciplined choice, and is not a passive thing. An interested and wide-awake reader will read *the* lines, *between* the lines, and *beyond* the lines! Thus, he becomes involved not only with the writing but also with the writer. He either agrees with a statement made, or argues, 'Is it correct? Is it pertinent? Is there anything I can do about it?' A splendid article, or an excellent pictorial feature, may open up undreamed-of vistas and future possibilities to the go-ahead person fired with ambition to improve himself or his prospects. And thoughtful magazine reading can illuminate and extend the meaning of many topics which were, till then, unknown subjects. By constant reference to appropriate periodicals and technical journals much light can be gained on anthropology, biology, zoology, botany, history, geography, politics, literature, foreign languages, geology, aeronautics and

aerodynamics as well as physics, chemistry, mathematics and many other subjects too numerous to mention here.

In this connexion, I might state that the careful perusal of current literature not only reaches its finest fruition in aiding to gain further knowledge in some specialized field of work, but also in helping in the all-round development of even the so-called 'liberally educated' individual; for then it achieves the broadest of all purposes—the securing of enlightenment on the many, and perennial, problems of man himself.

Here, it might be worth pointing out that a Gallup Poll taken in the spring of 1953 in the United States showed, strangely enough, that the 18 to 20 year olds were the best informed of any age-group in the country. And, for this progress, the schools were mainly responsible and deserve full credit. We too can take a lesson from the Americans, and start a programme of enforced reading during school hours so that the youth of India is made aware of the momentous events going on around them.

In cultivating the art of good reading we find that, at present, the main difficulties are the problems of learning, of lack of incentives, of inadequate materials, and of too little stimulating conversation, such as was the fashion in the famous, and now defunct, *salons* of the wealthy and cultured of a century or two ago when the wit, the genius, the artist, the poet and the beauty of the land foregathered for an evening of brilliant conversation and repartee. Today this fascinating art is almost dead owing to the rapid tempo of modern life. Hence it requires recultivating, and a fresh stimulus to make it flourish once again.

'We need to use to much better advantage our present-day technology for spreading information through the media of print, films, tape-recording, television, lantern slides, radio and gramophone recordings, for we are still amateurs in the art and science of effective communication.'

As audio-visual materials are among the most effective means of dispersing knowledge, attractive magazines, periodicals and journals should be used more and more by Indian schools and colleges since they are one of the chief tools for developing an alert and informed citizenry—of whom the country can be proud and from amongst whom future leaders can be drawn.

Several well-known authorities in educational techniques abroad are unanimous in stating that 'if students, while at high school and college, do not master the art of reading magazines, their future chances of being enlightened citizens, of their getting a liberal education, are poor. Books can tell us what happened in the past. Newspapers can give us a thin slice of the present. But the periodicals mediate between the out-of-dateness of the past and the up-to-dateness of daily newspapers.'

Though it is true that we do not have the wide selection of beautifully illustrated current literature that many foreign countries such as

America, Germany, Britain and China have, still, we should aim at providing the very best that we have, and in much greater quantity than is being done at present in our schools and colleges.

Now what about the other side of the picture? There are several barriers, at present, to the free use of magazines in our schools and colleges. First, is the scholastic rut we are in. Owing to the limited funds at the disposal of most institutions not much can be set aside for the purchase of up-to-date periodicals. Then too, the low salaries paid to the staff result in an uninterested and lackadaisical attitude, in general, towards education. Progressive and modern trends are, in many instances, frowned upon. The staff are unwilling to shoulder extra work, such as enforced reading periods during school hours would involve, and like to get through the bare routine of the day. For this attitude they can hardly be blamed.

Second is the persistence of the concept, still prevailing, that 'We must cover the ground ordained in the curricula', and this, usually, does not include magazine reading, or make provision for it as an integral part of the curricula.

Third is the oft-repeated and monotonous statement that 'Schools are not equipped, teachers not trained to make proper use of periodicals; that schools are geared too exclusively to a textbook approach'. To a large extent this criticism is true. But at a time when we are striving to progress in so many other fields of human endeavour is it not also essential that we try to change this unfortunate state of affairs as well? Hence it is the duty of our Government to insist that the future teachers of India be so educated that they have a wider outlook on the diverse aspects of life, and adequately meet the needs of the India in the making.

Those of us who are genuinely fond of reading know that one of the greatest rewards and joys of reading a particularly fine book or magazine article is to be able to discuss it with one's family or friends. In the same way, teachers can learn to use magazines not merely as reference materials for individual purposes, but also for the discussion of great and vital issues affecting our own people, those of another country or mankind in general. By discussing the problems that are real to them, and of pressing importance, students, in this manner, share the insight they have gained from reading. 'They also learn', says Edgar Dale, 'to disagree without being disagreeable, object to an idea without being objectionable, and argue skilfully without being tiresomely argumentative.' This, indeed, is an art well worth cultivating by all of us.

As school *is* life, as well as a preparation and rehearsal for life, I hope the readers of this article will find the plea couched in this article of vital importance for the future intellectual well-being of our people.

LALITA KOTWAL

World Survey of Education, A Handbook of Educational Organization and Statistics (Unesco, £4.4.0), Demy 4to, pp. iv + 943, 1955.

The World Survey of Education provides much material for general observations like 'out of every ten school age children in the world five are still not in school, four are in primary school and one is receiving post-primary education'. These are of doubtful importance when one goes beyond questions of literacy and primary education. For instance, we are told that 'countries which are educationally under-developed seem just as likely to have a low pupil-teacher ratio as the advanced countries'. But it is useful to remember that since the information is largely provided by Ministries of Education, the tendency to present an optimistic picture is greater in the under-developed than in the advanced countries. It is not reasonable to expect UNESCO to suggest that some of its information might be less reliable but it would be equally unreasonable for the reader to lose sight of this factor. One point that can be safely inferred is that the areas administered or influenced by the United States of America generally show a higher proportion of students going to institutions of higher education. The United States itself has 1783 out of 100,000, Alaska 932, Hawaii 959, and the Philippines 892. In contrast to this, the United Kingdom makes a very bad showing. The Survey, however, does more than provide the basis for comparative studies. The first three chapters are concerned with the world picture and the problems of evolving common standards and of statistical measurements. The various national sections covering some two hundred countries and territories are presented in a set pattern which indicates comparative study and helps further research. Each national section is divided into a number of headings under which the different aspects are discussed. The relation subsisting between various educational institutions in a country are ingeniously illustrated by diagrams, and a convenient glossary of types of institutions. The bibliography attached to the sections is a useful help to the student who seeks more detailed information.

The difficulties of comparison are well illustrated by the reference to the varying definitions of literacy, ranging from 'can read' to 'can write a short letter to a friend and read the answer'. In certain places, literacy means ability to read and write a specific language, as in Madagascar where a European language is insisted on and in certain Portuguese colonies where Portuguese is the test. In primary education, again, standards differ; as a convenient measure of calculation, the Survey takes the age-group between 5 and 15 years. Naturally the comparison becomes more difficult as the facts relate to the higher educational standards and systems.

The Survey provides a useful work of reference which may be relied on not only to furnish information but also to provoke interest among educationists. It is by its nature a tentative approach towards bringing the problems of various systems before world attention and towards stripping many of them of confusing local complications. The introduction modestly puts the Survey's task as rising out of the need to learn from the experience of others, and it hopes that the publication will promote more contacts between educationists and students of education. There is a great deal of material in this volume which will repay study, and, if the information is somewhat meagre, the interest that it evokes will no doubt lead to fuller knowledge. If only for bringing together material scattered in numerous reports and presenting varied information in an easily assimilable form; the Unesco workers deserve the thanks of the educational world.

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The Teaching of Modern Languages. (Unesco, 10*s.* 6*d.*), Demy 8vo, pp. 300, 1955.

In August 1953, the Unesco held an International Seminar at Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon, to discuss the problems facing teachers of modern languages and this volume is the result of their deliberations. For four weeks, participants from eighteen

countries not only discussed the relationship between modern language teaching and international understanding in general, but came to grips with a great many of the purely pedagogical aspects of the problem of the most effective teaching of languages of wide communication. It is a commonplace of modern thought that the world is shrinking and one must get to know our farthest neighbours. In fact everybody today is our neighbour. Outstanding educationists, administrators, psychologists and professors as well as inspectors of English language teaching not only hammered out the subjects that the Secretariat had asked them to discuss, but went into other problems that arose from these; for example, the question of textbooks, what their needs were and how they should be prepared, and what freedom should be given to teachers in their choice of textbooks. We, today, in certain provinces of India, are very much occupied with the question of what textbooks should cover and what controls there should be on the textbooks that are used in our schools, how the topics that are dealt with in the textbooks are to be introduced, how far controlled vocabulary seems to be used—and by controlled vocabulary is not only meant words, but what is being recognized today as of vital importance, viz. structures.

The chapter on the textbook needs to be studied by all teachers of modern foreign languages as well as administrators in countries where foreign languages are taught at different levels. Methodology naturally occupies a very important place in this study and the rivalry between the claims of different methods as well as the age at which a foreign language should be studied are discussed fully. One talks glibly of aural and visual aids. Here what they are, what actual difficulties there are in the use of these and how far an ordinary teacher may overcome them are discussed in detail. Today the Radio and Television are playing a greater and greater part in the teaching of foreign languages. Both the advantages and the disadvantages of the use of these media are discussed at length and we are given an insight into what is being done in various countries.

The main aim of Unesco, as we know, is cultural understanding of different peoples and aiding the so-called 'backward peoples' to make up the leeway in their education. The modern language teacher, it is recognized, has a vital part to play in the creation of understanding between nations. How this can be done by means of international school correspondence, exchange of teachers, both during school holidays and during term, and also what careful and long preliminary work has to be done before this can be undertaken, is discussed by people who have spent many years in such work. The special problems of language teachers in different countries and the main problem of the English teacher being sufficiently familiar not only with the language and its literature, but also with the ways of ordinary English-speaking peoples, as well as the changes in the language since the days when they themselves at school or college learnt it, receive very careful attention.

And now let us turn to the age-old story of the training of teachers. What they have to do, what sizes of classes they have to deal with, what standards of attainment in the language they propose to teach are desirable, and how these can be achieved, are all dealt with at very great length in Chapter 6 of this valuable Report. In fact to those of us who have been age-old teachers of modern languages, our faith in the real 'active method' is confirmed, but the dangers to be avoided and the difficulties of producing a sufficient number of teachers well trained in these methods are all set out. Every teacher of modern languages and, more than that, every rule-maker and administrator, should study every page of this book carefully not once, not twice, but over and over again. One owes a deep debt of gratitude to Unesco for producing this, the tenth of their series dealing with Problems in Education.

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